



THE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

13 JUN 1970

Honorable Richard Helms  
Director, Central Intelligence Agency  
Washington, D.C. 20505

Dear Dick:

I have your memorandum of May 21, 1970, expressing doubts that planned air reductions in Southeast Asia will leave adequate air support for Royal Lao irregular forces in Northern Laos.

As you probably know the FY 71 Department of Defense budget is facing serious pressure from both the Congress and inflation. We anticipate that these difficulties will increase sharply in FY 72. For this reason it is essential that we reevaluate the essentiality of each SEA program. As part of this review Secretary Laird asked the Joint Chiefs of Staff to assess the relative priorities of all Department of Defense programs. In their response they found that, in the absence of supplemental FY 71 funding from Congress, reductions in SEA air operations must be made if we are to support other essential SEA and non-SEA Department of Defense programs. Since the mood of the Congress, in our judgment, prevents consideration of supplemental funding at this time, Secretary Laird has approved the proposed air reductions in Thailand subject to review and final approval by the President.

Despite these reductions I believe planned FY 71 sortie levels will provide adequate air support for our forces and those of our allies. Our planning calls for an average of 19,400 attack sorties per month (13,800 US, 3,400 VNAF, and 2,200 RLAFF) during FY 71 versus current levels of about 26,000 per month. Our planned aircraft deployments, however, will permit a substantial surge capability to react to critical combat situations. For at least 30 days we could sustain a 25% surge which can accommodate current sortie levels, and for a few days we could surge to about 35,000 sorties.

OSD Review Completed. Declassified and Released as  
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It is important to remember that in Northern Laos we are flying about four times as many sorties in support of the RLG as we did eighteen months ago. The current sortie rate is about one-third higher than the average during 1969. Also, the Royal Laotian Air Force has received additional T-28 aircraft and AC-47 gunships, which should permit us to cut back on our support levels. The number of available sorties is not a complete measure of the support we can provide. We have made substantial qualitative improvements in our tactical air forces that should offset, at least in part, reductions in overall sortie rates. These include highly effective aircraft gunships (we now have 7 AC-130 and 36 AC-119 in SEA), a B-57 squadron equipped with the latest night sensing equipment, improved types of air ordnance, new and continually improving air tactics, and better intelligence collection and targeting techniques. Based on the above considerations, in my judgment some reductions in US sortie levels in Northern Laos will be possible without a significant impact on the balance between the RLG and NVA/Pathet Lao.

Several of the specific redeployment actions, which particularly concerned your Chief of Station in Vientiane, either will not occur or should not have the impact  expects. For instance:

1. Both the C-130 flareships and the AC-119s are to remain in SEA.
2. The 21st Special Operation Squadron will not be phased out (its personnel strength will be reduced, but no helicopters will be cut).
3. Although the 4258th Strategic Tanker Wing will be reduced, this will not prevent refueling sorties for Northern Laos because remaining tankers can handle the requirements.
4. The F-105 wing was chosen for redeployment from Thailand because in current operations these aircraft are the least effective of our deployed fighter force. They were used originally in penetrating North Vietnamese air defenses, but have limited effectiveness in other missions, e.g., close support or truck-killing.

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5. The phaseout of the Thai-based A-1 squadrons results from a planned turnover of the aircraft to the VNAF. Thus it is not a reduction in total SEA capability, but will reduce the level of air support available for Laos.

Sincerely,



Enclosures

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E X T R A C T

Out-of-Country/Offshore Effort

"Continue presently authorized air sortie levels of 1400 B-52, 14,000 USAF tactical fighter and 3,500 USN tactical fighter sorties per month until 15 July 1970. Assume that after 15 July the sortie rates will decrease to not more than those approved in the FY 1971 budget of 1200 B-52, 10,000 USAF tactical fighter, and 3,600 USN tactical fighter sorties. I realize that you may wish to use the sortie levels recommended in JCSM 202-70 of 1,000 B-52, 10,000 USAF tactical fighter, and 2,700 USN tactical fighter sorties."

Force Planning, Thailand

"The plan to redeploy 7,300 US Air Force and 2,565 US Army authorized personnel to reach an end FY 1971 ceiling of 32,200 is approved with the following exceptions:

--No forces are to be redeployed prior to 15 July 1970, with the exception of the F-102 detachment at Don Muang.

--Action must be taken to continue to provide a WILD WEASEL/IRON HAND capability in order to reduce risk to ARC LIGHT forces.

--Minimum work to keep route 223 open as agreed with the RTG must be accomplished via contract or other means after the 809th Engineer Battalion is withdrawn until the Royal Thai Highway Department begins major upgrading in CY 1972.

Following the precedent set last fall, negotiations with the RTG in Bangkok will precede implementation of these redeployments. No action should be taken which will reveal the size, timing or content of the reduction packages to the RTG except as authorized by the US Mission in Bangkok. It is recognized that exceptions to this policy may be necessary. Exceptions will be the subject of separate State/Defense instructions. Strength authorizations will be changed through the SFA Deployment Adjustment System."

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## ANNEX A TO APPENDIX C

1. (TS) Tentative Thailand Redeployment Packages:PACKAGE AUS AIR FORCE

<u>UNIT</u>	<u>UE/ AIRCRAFT</u>	<u>DESTINATION</u>	<u>SPACES</u>	<u>ESTIMATED REDEPLOYMENT TIME</u>
333 TFS	18 F-105	CONUS	559	SEP 70
354 TFS	18 F-105	CONUS	559	SEP 70
357 TFS	18 F-105	KADENA	596	SEP 70
44 TFS	18 F-105	KADENA	597	SEP 70
TAKHLI - PHASEDOWN		CONUS	865	DEC 70
4258 SQ	8 KC-135	CONUS	176	SEP 70
509 FI	4 F-102	CONUS	57	JUL 70
42 TEWS	5 EB-66	KADENA	186	JUL 70
TASK FORCE ALPHA	16 Hr		149	DEC 70
	operation only			
AMMR	MAINT REDUC		199	DEC 70
21 SOS	MANNING REDUC		76	JUL 70
	TOTAL		4,019	

US ARMY

HHD, 302d Sig Bn	CONUS	3	JUL 70
AUG A, 302d Sig Bn	CONUS	27	JUL 70
AUG B, 325th Sig Bn	CONUS	108	JUL 70
HHD, 379th Sig Bn	CONUS	7	JUL 70
AUG A, 379th Sig Bn	CONUS	33	JUL 70
AUG B, 379th Sig Bn	CONUS	24	JUL 70
AUG A, 442d Sig Bn	CONUS	9	JUL 70
AUG B, 442d Sig Bn	CONUS	4	JUL 70
AUG C, 442d Sig Bn	CONUS	11	JUL 70
1st Sig Det	CONUS	3	JUL 70
6th Sig Det	CONUS	3	JUL 70
9th Sig Det	CONUS	3	JUL 70
26th Sig Det	CONUS	3	JUL 70
28th Sig Det	CONUS	3	JUL 70
68th Sig Det	CONUS	3	JUL 70
70th Sig Det	CONUS	3	JUL 70
94th Sig Det	CONUS	3	JUL 70
296th Sig Det	CONUS	6	JUL 70
499th Sig Det	CONUS	6	JUL 70
USA Med Component	CONUS	7	AUG 70
SEATO WRAIR			
383d TC Det	CONUS	2	AUG 70
638th TC Det	CONUS	2	AUG 70
639th TC Det	CONUS	2	AUG 70
640th TC Det	CONUS	2	AUG 70
Organization of Med	CONUS	13	AUG 70
Dept Act USARSUPTHAI			
HHC, USARSUPTHAI	CONUS	130	AUG 70
USA Terminal Comd Thailand	CONUS	208	OCT 70
USA Depot Thailand	CONUS	108	DEC 70
HHC, USARSUPTHAI	CONUS	20	DEC 70
(Computer Svc Ctr)			
53d Trans Co	CONUS	65	DEC 70
505th Trans Co	CONUS	87	DEC 70
291st Trans Co	CONUS	6	DEC 70
313th Trans Co	CONUS	6	DEC 70

TOTAL 920  
TOTAL PKG A 4,939

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PACKAGE B

US AIR FORCE

<u>UNIT</u>	<u>UE/ AIRCRAFT</u>	<u>DESTINATION</u>	<u>SPACES</u>	<u>ESTIMATED REDEPLOYMENT TIME</u>
BLACK SPOT	2 AC-123	CONUS	61	JUN 71
Det 4 621 TCS Radar Site			67	MAR 71
11 TRS	20 RF-4C	CONUS	649	JUL 70
553 TRW	9 EC-121	CONUS	547	MAR 71
23 TASS	21 02/OV-10 (50%)	WHEELER/KOREA	198	JUN 71
22 SOS	25 A-1	ATTRITION	443	SEP 70
602 SOS	25 A-1	VNAF	443	JUN 71
1 SOS	25 A-1	VNAF	443	JUN 71
TAKHLI	PHASEOUT	CONUS	430	JUN 71
	<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>3,281</b>	

US ARMY

809th Engr Bn	CONUS	905	JUN 71
144th Engr Det	CONUS	22	JUN 71
16th Engr Co	CONUS	112	JUN 71
HHD, 519th TC Bn	CONUS	51	JUN 71
254th TC Det	CONUS	19	JUN 71
260th TC Co	CONUS	87	JUN 71
562d LM Co	CONUS	125	JUN 71
Hq MACTHAI/JUSMAGTHAI	CONUS	50	JUN 71
HHC, USARSUPHAI/	CONUS	193	JUN 71
13th MP Co	CONUS	81	JUN 71
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,645</b>	
	<b>TOTAL PKG B</b>	<b>4,926</b>	
	<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>9,865</b>	

2. (S) Major US Forces Remaining in Thailand after 1 July 1971:

US AIR FORCE

<u>UNIT</u>	<u>UE/AIRCRAFT</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
	6 C-130	U-TAPAO
34 TFS	18 F-4E	KORAT
469 TFS	18 F-4E	KORAT
42 TEWS	13 EB-66	KORAT
553 TRW	9 EC-121	KORAT
497 TFS	18 F-4D	KORAT
606 SOS	10 C-123	NKP
23 TASS	15 OV-10	NKP
	6 O-2	NKP
553 TRW	20 QU-22A	NKP
21 SOS	9 CH-3	NKP
21 SOS	11 CH-53	NKP
4258 SW	18 B-52D	U-TAPAO
--	17 B-52D	U-TAPAO
--	28 KC-135	U-TAPAO
25 TFS	18 F-4D	UBON
33 TFS	18 F-4D	UBON
35 TFS	18 F-4D	UBON

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<u>UNIT</u>	<u>UE/AIRCRAFT</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
13 TBS	10 B-57G	UBON
16 SOS	7 AC-130A	UBON
7 ABCCC	7 C-130E	UDORN
14 TRS	20 RF-4C	UDORN
13 TFS	18 F-4D	UDORN
555 TFS	18 F-4D	UDORN
40 ARRS	12 HH-53	UDORN

US ARMY

<u>UNIT</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
Hq MACTHAI/JUSMAGTHAI	BANGKOK
DEP Chief	BANGKOK-UDORN
SEATO MPO	BANGKOK
USA Med Component SEATO WRAIR	BANGKOK
ARPA	BANGKOK
DCA-SAM	BANGKOK-KORAT
Defense Attaches	BANGKOK
NSA Activities	Various
29 Signal Gp	Various
USARSUPTHAI	SATTAHIP-KORAT
(Depot)	
(1 Maint Bn)	
(2 Trans Truck Co)	
(1 Fld Hosp in Bkk)	
(Other Misc Log & Spt Activities)	
Special Forces Co	LOP BURI
USN VP Sq (3 aircraft)	U-TAPAO
USN OICC Detach	Various
USCG LORAN Stations	Various

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ANNEX B TO APPENDIX C

EFFECT OF REDEPLOYMENT PACKAGES  
ON MANPOWER AUTHORIZATION (SPACES)

	<u>Present Manpower 1/ Authorization</u>	<u>Package A</u>	<u>Residual</u>	<u>Package B</u>	<u>Residual</u>
Army	9,637	920	8,717	1,645	7,072
Navy/ Marine Corps/ Coast Guard	395		395		395
Air Force	32,033	4,019	28,014	3,281	24,733
TOTAL	42,065	4,939	37,126	4,926	32,200

1/ As of 1 April 1970

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MEMORANDUM FOR: DCI/SAVA

George:

General Cushman would like you to review this together with C/FE and meet with him in the near future to discuss the problem.



16-6-70  
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